

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 04360 261511Z

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4982

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 4360

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, CI, US

SUBJECT: US DECORATIONS FOR CHILEAN MILITARY OFFICIALS

1. THE EMBASSY/DAO ARE HOLDING SOME 16 DECORATIONS APPROVED BY DOD FOR ACTIVE DUTY AND RETIRED OFFICERS OF THE CHILEAN ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE. IN ALL BUT TWO CASES, THE DECORATIONS WERE AWARDED IN RECOGNITION OF MILITARY SERVICES PERFORMED BY THE CHILEAN OFFICERS WHILE STATIONED IN THE US OR AT US MILITARY INSTITUTIONS ABROAD (PANAMA CANAL ZONE).

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD PROCEDURES, THE AMBASSADOR'S CONCURRENCE IN THE PRESENTATION OF THE DECORATIONS WAS REQUESTED BY DOD. IN NO CASE HAS THE AMBASSADOR FOUND REASON TO DENY A REQUEST BASED ON THE CHILEAN OFFICER'S RECORD, BUT IN ALL CASES HE DECIDED TO DEFER PRESENTATION BECAUSE OF THE STATE OF US-CHILEAN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THE DESIRE TO AVOID GIVING AN APPEARANCE OF US ENDORSEMENT TO GOC POLICIES AND ACTIONS. THUS, OVER THREE YEARS THE BACKLOG GREW TO THE PRESENT NUMBER -- AND THE GREATER THE BACKLOG, THE MORE TROUBLESOME THE DECISION TO AWARD THE DECORATIONS.

3. THE 16 OFFICERS ARE VARIED. THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME IN THE US PRECEDED THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. OTHERS ARE RETIRED GENERAL OFFICERS (INCLUDING THE NEW CHILEAN AMBASSADOR IN THE PRC). ONE IS AS JUNIOR AS A FIRST LIEUTENANT. THE ONLY PROMINENT OFFICERS
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PAGE 02 SANTIA 04360 261511Z

ARE: B/GEN ENRIQUE RUIZ, REGIONAL GIVERNOR IN PUERTO MONTT AND FORMER HEAD OF AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE; B/GEN WASHINGTON CARRASCO, A SENIOR ARMY OFFICER IN THE SANTIAGO AREA; AND V/ADM JORGE PAREDES, FIRST NAVAL ZONE COMMANDER. MANY OF THE CHILEAN OFFICERS KNOW THEY WERE NAMED FOR DECORATIONS. WE ASSUME THEY KNOW THE REASONS FOR THE DELAY IN PRESENTATION.

4. THE TRANSFER OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE ON JUNE 8 AND OF ALL OTHER ATTACHES IN THE NEAR FUTURE BRINGS TO A HEAD THE QUESTION OF PRESENTATION. CHILEAN DECORATIONS ARE CUSTOMARILY PRESENTED TO DEPARTING US MILITARY ATTACHES, AND THE MISSION ATTACHES ARE RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT CHILEAN AWARDS UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. THE BACKLOGGED DECORATIONS COULD BE AWARDED IN A LOW KEY MANNER -- SINGLY OR A FEW AT A TIME -- SO AS TO GENERATE LITTLE OR NO LOCAL PUBLICITY. THE ABSENCE OF AN AMBASSADOR WOULD TEND TO MINIMIZE MEDIA COVERAGE.

6. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE.
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Message Attributes

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